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////// C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED SIPIS CAP) ////

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/10/2018

TAGS: KRAD PREL ENRG SENV ZK AF

SUBJECT: UN PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY FOR CENTRAL ASIA SRSG  
JENCA BRIEFS AMBASSADOR KHALILZAD AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON  
UNRCCA INITIATIVES

REF: TASHKENT 1291

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Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

Summary

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¶11. (SBU) Head of the Ashgabat-based UN Regional Center for Preventative Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) Ambassador Miroslav Jenca delivered a well-received statement on December 10 to the Security Council on UNRCCA activities and outlined plans for the future. In response to questions from Belgium and Italy on UNRCCA's coordination with other UN bodies, Jenca described his recent coordination meeting with UNDP regional directors in Almaty, but noted that "enormous space" for improvement existed. France brought up UNRCCA's potential role in resolving the Afghanistan conflict, to which Jenca expressed concern over Afghanistan's failure to participate in regional negotiations on rights over the Amu Darya, central Asia's largest river.

¶12. (C) Summary continued: Prior to the Council meeting, Jenca, in a December 9 meeting with Ambassador Khalilzad, requested US support for UNRCCA, and previewed the same themes he discussed in the Security Council. Ambassador Khalilzad welcomed UNRCCA engagement on resolving border and regional infrastructure concerns in Afghanistan, but emphasized UN SRSG Eide's lead role in coordinating UN efforts. Khalilzad also noted that the central Asian states must work with President Karzai rather than around him as suggested by the Uzbeks. Jenca said he will not attend the informal ministerial-level Neighbors of Afghanistan meeting in Paris on December 14. End Summary.

Jenca to Security Council: UNRCCA's way forward

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¶13. (SBU) In his briefing to the Security Council, Jenca described his first six months on the job as dedicated to identifying challenges to peace and security in Central Asia and developing a two-year workplan for UNRCCA. He said UNRCCA should be viewed as a neutral forum, designed to help prevent and resolve conflict through coordination and provision of specialized technical assistance. Laying out three potential areas of conflict, -- cross-border threats from terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking; environmental degradation such as the Aral Sea disaster and radioactive contamination; and the regional ripple effect caused by Afghanistan's instability -- Jenca concluded that UNRCCA was well-placed to push for UN political engagement to ensure contentious issues do not boil over. He highlighted recent UNRCCA activities, including the facilitation of Central Asian political discussions at the deputy foreign

minister level, and the preliminary agreement on water and energy management reached on the sidelines of the October 10 CIS summit held in Bishkek. Jenca touched briefly on the small staff size of UNRCCA, but made no specific requests for additional support.

¶4. (SBU) Several Security Council members gave brief statements in support of UNRCCA. Russia emphasized the importance of coordination with regional bodies such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, while Italy and Belgium pinpointed the importance of cooperation with other UN programs in the region. Italy added that conflict prevention initiatives such as UNRCCA should be a priority for the UN's Department of Political Affairs. France asked about UNRCCA's role in Afghanistan, noting that the situation required complete transparency, and highlighting the upcoming ministerial-level Friends of Afghanistan meeting in Paris December 14 (Note: Jenca told Ambassador Khalilzad that he would not attend the Paris conference. End Note). Jenca responded that to avoid duplicating existing efforts, he had recently organized a meeting with UNDP regional coordinators, but added that given UNDP's country-specific programming, an "enormous space" for improvement in coordination existed. Jenca said he had also met with NATO, EU, OSCE, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and CIS, among others, and outlined his plans to travel to Tehran in the near future to meet with the Economic Cooperation Organization.

¶5. (SBU) Jenca also told the Security Council that he is focused on the regional dimension of the conflict in Afghanistan, in particular infrastructure projects that require regional cooperation such as roads, railways, and electricity lines. He expressed concern about Afghanistan's failure to coordinate with central Asian countries on management of the Amu Darya river, which he fears would negatively impact Afghanistan in the future. He said he supported and respected SRSG Eide's mandate, and understood that all Afghan-related initiatives needed to be coordinated through him.

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Jenca's Meeting with Amb. Khalilzad

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¶6. (C) In his December 9 discussion with Ambassador Khalilzad, Jenca said Eide told him during their December 4 meeting in Ashgabat that he was disappointed by his meetings in Tashkent, noting that the Uzbeks were not ready to move forward with the 6 plus 3 initiative (reftel), and that it would be impossible to focus on internal factions in Afghanistan without Karzai's involvement. Jenca said he is in constant contact with Eide, however disagreement exists amongst the central Asians on dealing with Afghanistan, hindering UNRCCA's involvement. He said that while Turkmenistan was ready to assist Afghanistan through subsidized electricity and debt reduction, Uzbekistan appeared unwilling to take such steps. He told Khalilzad that he expects UNRCCA could be most effective in advocating for regional infrastructure projects to encourage stabilization in Afghanistan.

¶7. (SBU) Ambassador Khalilzad noted that the US co-sponsored, along with the four other central Asian countries and Afghanistan, Turkmenistan's resolution on energy transit and security. The resolution, which reached consensus in the 2nd Committee November 25 and is expected to be adopted by the General Assembly next week, welcomes a Turkmenistan initiative to hold an international conference on energy transportation in 2009. Jenca said that UNRCCA planned to provide experts to assist in drafting the multilateral legal framework for energy transportation he hoped would result from the 2009 conference.

Khalilzad